

Shuttle Mission Honors American Women Pioneers From Past To Present

July 16, 1999

Takes Sacagawea Into New Territory

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER – Sacagawea, who accompanied Lewis and Clark on their historic expedition to the Pacific Ocean and back, will attend another pioneering mission this month. Her image appears on twelve new gold dollar coins which the U.S. Mint will send into space on the first shuttle flight ever commanded by a woman, astronaut Eileen Collins. The shuttle launch is scheduled for July 20th.

“There will be two women pioneers on this flight,” said Philip N. Diehl, Director of the U.S. Mint. “Commander Collins is carrying on the tradition of women trail blazers and we can’t imagine a better way to honor Sacagawea’s legacy.”

The twelve shuttle coins are 22-karat gold versions of a new dollar coin, which is scheduled to be released into general circulation in 2000. Authorized by the United States Dollar Coin Act of 1997, the new dollar coin will replace the Susan B. Anthony dollar. It will be golden in color, will have a smooth edge and wide border to ensure the coin is easily distinguishable. On the obverse side it will bear the image of Sacagawea with her infant son, Jean Baptiste. An American eagle will adorn the reverse, along with seventeen stars, one for each of the states at the time of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

“I believe this to be an excellent opportunity to showcase the pioneering spirit and remarkable achievements of American women, spanning nearly two centuries,” said Daniel S. Goldin, Administrator of NASA.

Astronaut Collins has been a NASA pilot since 1991 and has spent over 400 hours in space. She will lead her crew on a five-day mission aboard the shuttle Columbia.

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